



GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET

# WHITEHALL Conservation Area

# 19



City of Westminster

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND CITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SERVICES MAY 2004

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**Designation:** First designated as a Conservation Area in 1969 as part of the larger Government Precinct Conservation Area. Redesignated in 1987 as the Whitehall Conservation Area.

**Historical Background:** Throughout the medieval period, the Palace of Whitehall grew as a complex of buildings housing the Royal Family. It was substantially extended by Henry VIII who also acquired St. James's Park and other land for hunting, thus assuring the continuing close relationship of open space to Royal and government buildings. The eastern portion of the Palace was a rambling mixture of buildings and, as the first instalment of a grandiose rebuilding scheme by Inigo Jones, the Banqueting House was begun in 1617. In 1698 a fire destroyed almost the whole of the Palace; the plans to rebuild the area as Royal Residence and Courts were abandoned, and Jones's scheme was never implemented. A few elements of the Palace of Whitehall remain, for example Henry VIII's wine cellars in the basement of the Ministry of Defence Building, Cockpit Passage, and the gable wall of the tennis court at 70 Whitehall (now the Cabinet Office). Thereafter the area developed as a centre of government and many early important buildings survive, including the Admiralty (Ripley, 1722-6) with its screen by Robert Adam (1759-61), Horse Guards (1750-60 by Kent), Dover House (Paine, 1755-8) with its later domed forebuilding (Holland, 1787) and Kent's Treasury Building (1733-6). Together with the late 17th century and 18th century buildings of Downing Street they form a remarkable complex of official and domestic architecture around Horse Guards Parade. In the 19th century, building was undertaken on a much larger scale and with increasing grandeur; the south end of the west side of Whitehall shows this clearly; the Treasury Buildings to Whitehall were partly rebuilt by Soane (1810-20) and altered and refaced by Barry (1845) in a classical idiom. The Foreign Office (now the Foreign & Commonwealth Office with Home Office) was built to the design of Scott (1860-73) and further blocks of government offices were built at the southern end of Whitehall to Great George Street (now the Treasury) by Brydon and Tanner (1898-1912). In the last 10 years William Whitfield's Richmond House has been completed and the street block bounded by Parliament Street, Bridge Street and Canon Row refurbished as part of the Parliamentary Buildings (Phase I) project. There are current proposals to provide a new underground station to Bridge Street with parliamentary offices above, in a scheme designed by Michael Hopkins.

**Listed Buildings:** Virtually all the buildings facing Whitehall are listed. Horse Guards, Dover House, The Banqueting House, Old Admiralty Building (including the Admiralty and Admiralty Screen), Government Offices to Horseguards Avenue (now the Ministry of Defence) the Treasury (now the Cabinet Office) the First Lords Residence, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Norman Shaw Building North (New Scotland Yard) and Nos. 10- 12 Downing Street are listed Grade I as are the Cenotaph and Queen Mary's Steps. Richmond Terrace, Nos. 42, 43 and 47 Parliament Street, the War Office, the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Court, the Royal United Service Institution, Nos. 55 Whitehall (the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food), the Norman Shaw Building South, Gwydyr House and Westminster Bridge are listed Grade II\*. Further buildings are listed Grade II including Nos. 85 Whitehall, Nos. 38-41, 44-46 and 48-54 Parliament Street, Nos 10-12 Bridge Street, No. 2 Canon Row and the Embankment Wall, lamps and lampstandards and a number of statues in Raleigh Green, Victoria Embankment Gardens, Whitehall and in Horse Guards Parade.

**Key Features:** The Ceremonial Route down Whitehall lined with 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th century grand government buildings is of national and international renown and is also a major tourist attraction. It contains many of central government's ministries as well as Downing Street, now gated, where the official residences of the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer are located. Horse Guards Parade provides an important

pedestrian route to St James's Park and a large open arena where annually the Trooping of the Colour takes place. The Cenotaph, positioned in the middle of Whitehall is an international memorial to those who died for their country in armed conflicts, and the annual Remembrance Service is held in front of it. The Conservation Area includes the tree lined public open spaces of Victoria Embankment Gardens, containing a number of statues of important statesmen, as well as the Embankment itself which affords panoramic views across the Thames. There is more open space in Raleigh Green, on the east side of Whitehall.

The area contains many buildings of national importance, in both architectural and historic terms. Some of the most important buildings in terms of the townscape of the Conservation Area are the Banqueting House, Horse Guards, the Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Adjacent Conservation Areas:** The Conservation Area is bounded by the Trafalgar Square and Savoy Conservation Areas to the north, the St James's and Royal Parks Conservation Areas to the west, the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area to the south, and the Birdcage Walk Conservation Areas to the south west.

**Strategic Views:** The strategic views from Parliament Hill to the Palace of Westminster, from Primrose Hill to the Palace of Westminster, and from Henry VIII's Mound, Richmond Park, to St. Paul's Cathedral, all cross the Conservation Area. The strategic viewing corridor from Westminster Pier to St Paul's Cathedral starts in this Conservation Area.

**Areas of Special Archaeological Priority:** Within the Ludenwic and Thorney Island area of special archaeological priority.

**Article 4 Directions:** None.

**Regulation 7 Directions:** None.

**Planning Briefs and Design Guides:** No guidelines specific to this area.

**Spaces protected by the London Squares Act 1931:** None

**Registered Historic Parks and Gardens:**  
Victoria Embankment Gardens (part), (Grade II\*)

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